

Miami Herald

Reef, a \$1 billion ‘ghost kitchen’ startup, plans to hire 1,000 in Miami

BY ROB WILE

AUGUST 23, 2021 01:45 PM



One REEF mobile kitchen in Brickell is dedicated to Man vs. Fries, a Los Angeles-based delivery-only business that is in 101 parking-lot kitchens across the country.

CARLOS FRÍAS CFRIAS@MIAMIHERALD.COM

REEF, the Miami-based technology and so-called ghost kitchen startup that has [raised more than \\$1 billion](#), announced Monday a plan to hire more than 1,000 employees in the Miami area over the next three years.

The roles will span the spectrum of the company, from kitchens and operations to corporate and research development. Kitchen employee wages start at \$20 an hour.

“We are proud to work with REEF to invest in our local economy and workforce by bringing over a thousand full-time, good-paying jobs to our county,” said Miami-Dade Mayor Daniella Levine Cava in a statement. “Companies like REEF are working to build better communities by establishing a pipeline of opportunities for people from underserved areas, and by collaborating across nonprofit, academia and government to invest in our local workforce.”

“As the City of Miami continues to establish itself as one of the country’s leading innovation hubs, we are excited to work with REEF in creating jobs for more than a thousand Miamians,” said Miami Mayor Francis Suarez in a statement. “REEF has been an invaluable partner for the city and a pillar of our progress in evolving Miami into a thriving tech hub.”

REEF’s “ghost kitchen” business model works by [buying under-used urban spaces, like parking lots, and converting them into places that house truck-trailers in which meals are prepared](#). Users can then use a major delivery app, like Doordash or UberEats, to order food — without necessarily knowing where it is coming from. They only know that, thanks to REEF’s locations, it is supposed to arrive in 30 minutes or less.

REEF now has 4,500 ghost-kitchen locations around the world. Its backers include tech venture giant SoftBank, which now has a significant Miami presence.

REEF also announced Monday a national effort to hire from underserved communities that it is calling the NBRHD Career Initiative. It will emphasize hiring people of color, women, veterans, and formerly incarcerated workers.

At a news conference with local elected officials announcing the NBRHD effort, Arlene Peterson, senior director of development at Chapman Partnership, an advocacy group that works with homeless populations, said its 800-capacity client base is almost full thanks to the pandemic.

“When you’re in crisis, you’re living breath to breath,” Peterson said. “That’s where REEF comes in. Instead of maybe a job that lasts for a couple of weeks, [REEF] is ensuring something sustainable — they’re providing perspective, patience and flexibility.”

REEF is launching the program in Miami and plans to expand it to Chicago and Austin, Texas, in the coming weeks. It is partnering with Florida International University, Miami Dade College, Lotus House, Camillus House, Chapman Partnership, CareerSource, LEAP, Fruits of Charity, and Miami Community Ventures — a Miami-Dade Beacon Council Foundation Initiative — in the effort. The initiative will provide access to job placement and training across a variety of industry sectors with opportunities for advancement and career-track roles.

“We are proud to launch the NBRHD Career Initiative that will create opportunities in communities that are too often passed over and better ensure that our employees represent the neighborhoods in cities where we operate,” said Ari Ojalvo, CEO of REEF, in a statement.

REEF currently has 2,400 employees in Miami-Dade County.

Rob Wile covers business, tech, and the economy in South Florida. He is a graduate of Northwestern's Medill School of Journalism and Columbia University. He grew up in Chicago.

Read more here: <https://www.miamiherald.com/article253643723.html>